

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL BOMBAY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6117

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOMBAY 0248

FROM KUX

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: OGEN IN

SUBJECT: VISIT TO INDIA BY PMA DELEGATION

1. DURING CALL BY INS DIRECTOR KUX JAN 30 PFIZER INDIA MANAGING DIRECTOR PILLAI, WHO IS ALSO PRESIDENT OF ORGANIZATION OF PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCERS OF INDIA (OPPI) AND AS SUCH INDUSTRY SPOKESMAN FOR DEALINGS WITH GOI ON HATHI COMMISSION REPORT, EXPRESSED SERIOUS CONCERN ABOUT WORD THAT GEORGE BALL WOULD BE ARRIVING FEB 16 WITH HIGH LEVEL DELEGATION FROM US TO MAKE PITCH ABOUT HATHI COMMISSION REPORT TO INDIA GOVERNMENT.

2. ACCORDING TO PILLAI, BALL MISSION WAS LIKELY TO SET BACK RATHER THAN IMPROVE PROSPECTS FOR RESOLUTION OF INDUSTRY PROBLEMS IN MANNER SATISFACTORY TO US AND OTHER FOREIGN COMPANIES. WHEN IDEA ORIGINALLY DEVELOPED LAST FALL PILLAI EXPLAINED THAT SITUATION WAS SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT THAN AT PRESENT. GANESH, MINISTER THEN DEALING WITH PHARMACEUTICALS WAS PRO-COMMUNIST AND THERE SEEMED NO HARM IN HIGH LEVEL GROUP. NOW, HOWEVER, GANESH HAD BEEN REPLACED BY NEW MINISTER SETHI WHO HAD SO FAR NOT FULLY FOCUSED ON HATHI COMMISSION PROBLEM BUT WHOM PILLAI THOUGHT COULD BE BROUGHT AROUND IF PROPERLY APPROACHED. PILLAI SAID THAT OPPI THOUGHT BEST STRATEGY WAS FOR THEM TO WORK PRIVATELY ON SETHI WHICH THEY HAD SO FAR NOT HAD TIME TO DO. PILLAI FEARED THAT PREMATURE ARRIVAL OF HIGH LEVEL GROUP BEFORE SUCH TALKS WOULD FORCE SETHI TO TAKE A STAND WHICH, PILLAI FEARED, MIGHT WELL BE UNFAVORABLE FROM INDUSTRY STANDPOINT. PILLAI SAID HE WAS GOING TO

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CONTACT OTHER COMPANY REPS LOCALLY AND SAID HE WOULD WELCOME ANY

HELP WE COULD PROVIDE TO SEEK DELAY OR CANCELLATION IN HIGH LEVEL PMA MISSION.

3. KUX SAID THAT WE HAD ALSO RECOMMENDED EARLIER AGAINST HIGH LEVEL MISSION. IN VIEW OF CHANGE OF MINISTERS AND ALSO RECENT STRAIN IN POLITICAL RELATIONS SINCE MRS GANDHI'S ATTACK ON US, KUX AGREED THIS SEEMED LIKE POOR TIME FOR US GROUP TO APPEAR TO BE PUTTING PUBLIC PRESSURE ON GOI.

4. FOR DELHI: SUGGEST THAT LANDE TAKE THIS ISSUE UP WITH PHARMACEUTICAL REPS ATTENDING JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL. NOTE THAT WIEN, WHO HAS BEEN SPEARHEAD OF IDEA OF HIGH-LEVEL MISSION, IS AMONG THEM. WIEN HAS REFUSED TO LISTEN TO OUR ADVICE IN THE PAST, BUT SEE NO REASON WHY LANDE CANNOT TRY HIS HAND WITH THIS GENTLEMAN.

5. FOR NEA/INS: SUGGEST THAT MORLEY CALL BARRY MCTAGGERT, PFIZER EXECUTIVE VP, AND MAKE CLEAR FOR REASONS NOTED BY PILLAI AND KUX ABOVE THAT VISIT SEEMS TO MAKE EVEN LESS SENSE THAN PREVIOUSLY AND WE AGAIN RECOMMEND AGAINST IT. WOULD ALSO BE USEFUL TO CONTACT WHOEVER MINDS THE SHOP IN PMA IN WIEN'S ABSENCE AS WELL AS ANY OTHER APPROPRIATE PHARMACEUTICAL REPS WITH WHOM WE HAVE BEEN DEALING IN HOPES THAT MISSION MIGHT BE DELAYED UNTIL MORE OPPORTUNE TIME.
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